

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 INT-05 TRSE-00 OPIC-03

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R 081055Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0519

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EINV, EMIN, AF

SUBJ: EMERAL EXPLOITATION IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A) KABUL 0104 B) SECSTATE WASHDC 012893

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT (GOA) EXPRESSED INTEREST IN FINDING A FOREIGN PARTNER FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF EMERALD DEPOSITS IN THE PANJSHER VALLEY. MICHAEL DAVIDOV, MINERAL AND GEM ENTERPRISES, RESPONDED WITH A PROPOSAL FOR A COOPERATIVE PROJECT, AND RECENTLY RETURNED TO AFGHANISTAN TO DISCUSS HIS PROPOSAL IN PERSON. HOWEVER, HE WAS INFORMED THAT THE GOA HAS NOW DECIDED TO EXPLOIT THEIR EMERALD DEPOSITS WITHOUT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, WITH PLANS TO BEGIN A MINING PROJECT IN THE PANJSHER IN SPRING 1977.

2. DAVIDOV DOUBTS THAT THE AFGHANS WILL BE ABLE TO PRODUCE MORE THAN A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE EMERALDS WHICH A WELL-FINANCED AND EXPERIENCED FOREIGN FIRM COULD. ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT-VENTURE MINING PROJECT NOW SEEMS PRECLUDED, HE REMAINS INTERESTED IN ENTERING INTO A PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH THE AFGHANS. THE EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWED UP THE VISIT WITH A LETTER TO MINISTER OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES ABDUL TAWAB ASEFI INFORMING HIM OF DAVIDOV'S CONTINUED INTEREST IN WORKING WITH THE GOA, BUT TO DATE WE HAVE NO REPLY.

3. COMMENT: DAVIDOV HAD SOME INTERESTING COMMENTS TO MAKE ABOUT AFGHAN EMERALDS. ACCORDING TO HIM, AFGHAN EMERALDS, WHICH ARE OF VERY HIGH QUALITY, ARE FINDING THEIR WAY

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INTO EUROPEAN MARKETS IN SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES. HOWEVER,

EMERALDS ARE VITURALLY UNOBTAINABLE IN KABUL. FOR EXAMPLE,
DAVIDOV WAS PREPARED TO SPEND UP TO \$500,000 HERE FOR
EMERALD PURCHASES, BUT WAS UNABLE TO FIND ANY FOR SALE.
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF PRESENT AFGHAN PRODUCTION
IS BEING SMUGGLED OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
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